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CHAPTER SIX

THE social life which my parents led with other families in the district towns was shared by us and all the other children. Burmese children do not live in a child's world cut off from reality—there is no specially created world for them like that of J. M. Barrie—they are given enough food for their wildest imagination, but this feeds equally the grandmother and nurses who tell them stories. No special children's parties with cakes and games for them are provided; they go everywhere with the grown-ups, on visits, excursions and festivals, they eat and sleep in the same rooms as the elders and hear most of the conversation. One result is to make Burmese children more conscious of family ties and responsibilities, and to prepare them better for any calamities that may befall them in adolescence or any time before they are fully grown up. Yet no one who sees Burmese children can doubt that delight, wonder and pure joy are present in their lives.

All Burmese social gatherings centre round either religious observances or eating. We are still unsophisticated enough to have the same way of enjoying ourselves whether in city or country, and for that reason these district towns formed such a perfect background for happy days. In the towns that I remember, a river ran through, with sandbanks at edges or in midstream; this, with the monasteries and pagoda precincts a little way out of the busy quarters, private garden orchards and the houses of friends, provided the background for all the social life which my parents had, and is the reason why Burmese people never form social clubs. Most of the officials went to play tennis at the Gymkhana club with European members, but it had no real part in their lives.

When we went on *pyaw-pwè-sas*, happy-eating-gatherings, at pagodas, with two or three other families, the grown-ups, including aunts and dependents of the families, made elaborate food arrangements because the joy of the occasion was to cook on a large-scale in the open air. They took pots, dishes, food and washing apparatus for about twenty people. We started with silent recitation of prayers before the golden spire in the cool morning air, holding silver lilies between folded hands and being so careful not to breathe in the fragrance of the flowers, because my mother taught us that we should not first enjoy the beauty of flowers which are to be offered. When our short prayers were through, we stuck the flowers in a vase or niche at the pagoda base, lighted a row of candles

517 along a ledge or parapet, and walked quietly round the pagoda with the paved stones so cool beneath our bare feet, while the grown-ups still prayed silently. As soon as they finished and got up, it was the signal to release our spirits and bound away to the far corner where the servants were already beginning to unpack the pots and arrange three stones around for each fire. We were allowed to cut up onions or chillies until we got bored, and spent the rest of the morning playing games or exploring the country around, coming back to find a meal miraculously cooked, with curries in lacquer dishes and rice in banana leaves. After the meal, mats were spread in the breeziest spot, and we lay down beside the grown-ups who told beads and talked by turns.

517 647 351 Garden orchards were another source of deep long whole-day joy. The Burmese *u-yin* is usually translated as orchard, but after seeing English apple and cherry orchards I must translate it more fully. An u-yin is more arboreal and leafy; also one must enjoy it positively, that is, there must be in it a bamboo or light wooden house. In a hot climate an u-yin raises visions of shade; cool dark shade, leaves, only a few flowers unless they are of flowering trees, eating of the fruits and vegetables while there, and lying on a mat in the afternoon breeze. None of the a-so-ya mins could possess u-yins or gardens like this where they were posted, because their stay was so transitory. But the education officer,

that is, the D.I.S. (District Inspector of Schools), whether active or retired, was usually more permanent and could dig his toes in more happily. The social relationship was also ideal. Earning less than the other officials, he could yet offer them this rich hospitality of natural pleasures.

When we were in Maubin the D.I.S. was our friend U Taik Wan. He and his family of ten sons and daughters had the u-yin developed to its fullest. He had a low large house where the river took a bend and had fenced in this bed with bamboo stakes and a diving platform. The garden orchard stretched away from the house to a bamboo hut at the far end, with open verandahs under the trees. The speciality of his orchard were his sweet-sour marian trees. The marian is the *Bonea Burmanica*, common to Burma and northern Assam, where it forms an ideal appetizer for the heat-drowsy inhabitants. It is sour, of a sharp biting sourness which now makes my mouth water with longing. It is too sour to eat except doused in strong salt sauce or fish paste, salt being our antidote to sourness, in which I differ from the English idea of cooking, for salt combines and merges in with sourness whereas a pound of sugar thrown into a gooseberry tart would still leave it too sour for me. The marian is a small fruit, green when young and orange-yellow when ripe, with a pretty purple seed which has given its name to the Burmese colour "mauve". There is a sweet variety which is not popular. Sometimes, however, a prize tree is found which produces a sweet-sour marian, a sour fruit with its sting taken off. Such a tree should be treated with the greatest care; its fruits must never be salted or pickled as sour fruits are treated, because the "sour" use would communicate itself to the tree by what may be called sympathetic magic. Rather, my mother made jam (with sugar) of these marians, for the improvement of U Taik Wan's tree.

My mother was very punctilious about such things; the girl servants were never allowed to pluck the citron leaves for our salad because a woman in menstruation makes the tender leaves of the citron tree curl up and lose their succulence when she plucks them. U Taik Wan had a row of sweet-sour marian trees which he guarded from flying foxes by throwing a net across one face of them, showing a wall of these creatures hanging head downwards, to passers-by.

Our pyaw-pwè-sas at the Taik Wan's always began with a lot of water-fun. We never used bathing dresses, but adapted our longyis for swimming. This longyi is shaped and wrapped, like the more famous sarong, at the waist normally, but women and girls take it above the bosom when they discard their jackets. This enables all our poorer women to bathe with perfect decorum at public wells and streams.

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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wore. Some of them went the next day to the English missionary chaplain, and told him of the misfortune that had befallen them, and how so completely were they rendered destitute that they had been indebted to the charity of the inhabitants of the monastery for a breakfast that morning. The clergyman promised to do what he could for them, and the same evening went along to view the site of the fire. What was his astonishment to find that the burnt-out victims had rigged up a rude stage among the charred stumps of their house-posts, and in default of a house to sleep in, were prepared to spend the night listening to the love-making of the princes and princesses, and laughing at the caustic witticisms of the clown, not a few of the jokes being inspired by the blackened surroundings. Such defiance of all the ills of fate is very characteristic, and would seem to a Burman mind the most natural thing to do under the circumstances, since it afforded both distraction and amusement.

If any one has escaped the curse of Adam it is the Burman. He does not need to earn his bread with the sweat of his brow, and riches having no attraction for him, when his patch of paddy land has been reaped, his only concern is how to pass the time, and that is no very difficult matter, where he has plenty of cheroots and betel-nut. He can stroll along to neighbour Maung Gyi's, whose son has a knack for wood-carving, and watch him as he deftly cuts out a piece of elaborate scroll-work for the roof of a neighbouring monastery, or finishes off the grim features of a bilu for the English Inspector of Police. Next door the sayā is engaged on a painting, the representation of some palace scene, or of some well-known event in the life of the Lord Buddha. Burmese artists do not, as a rule, paint likenesses, though they are by no means unsuccessful when they make the attempt. Any one but a high official would probably consider it a mark of great presumption and conceit to hang up a picture of himself in his house. There is, however, none of the objection to portrait painting which is so common with some other nations. For example, the Mohammedans will not suffer likenesses to be drawn for fear they should demand a soul on the Day of Judgment, and so some actual human being might come to be left out in the cold. Catlin

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma AP1
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tells us that the American Indian chief was in a state of great alarm lest his soul might be carried off with his picture. A notion of the same kind appears in the Chinese custom of getting a priest to put in the pupil of the eye, a method which often has rather a ghastly effect when the reverend gentleman is not skilful. Similarly, every Chinese-owned craft, from the sampan to the English-built iron screw steamer, has a couple of eyes painted on its bows, in order that it may see the way. Down in the Straits, and in all places where there are many Chinese, the local steamers, whoever their owners may be, are all endowed with eyes. Were they not so favoured, no Chinaman would travel with them as a passenger, or send any of his goods aboard of them. The Burman is not troubled with any such fantastic notions, and has no objection whatever to sitting for his portrait, only, as King Mindôn said to Yule, they prefer a flattering likeness to an exact one. It is seldom, however, that a Burman has a picture gallery in his house, and the village artist usually confines himself to vivid-coloured sketches for the funeral of a pôngyi, or to be hung round the mandut, where the great people sit to look on at a play. The drawing and the perspective are naturally a little faulty, but the details are usually worked out with very creditable skill.

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Thus wandering about, seeing what his neighbours are doing, with an occasional visit to the monastery to have some edifying talk with the religious, the villager may spend the time very comfortably. Oftenest however, he stays at home, and waits for visitors to drop in and have a little gossip. The goodwife always has a little shop in the lower part of the building. There is hardly a single house in the whole village where something is not offered for sale: a few dried fish, betel-nut, with the fresh green leaves, lime, cardamoms, and cutch, all ready for making up, half a dozen cocoa-nuts, or perhaps some twopenny-ha'penny knives, looking-glasses, coloured tumblers, and paltry Manchester goods, or where there are many girls about the house, a few home-made lungyis and pasos, waist-cloths, woven at odd times in the loom which stands in the yard or in a corner of the verandah of every house. The stock-in-trade is

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2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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the monks are perhaps

276 792 the most persistent chewers of the good betel. Smoking is prohibited, but nothing is said against betel, and it is considered a great stimulator of the meditative faculties. The lime used very speedily corrodes and destroys the teeth, and then the old pôngyi has to make the scholars crush up the nuts so that they may not hurt his toothless gums. It is a common belief that no one can speak Burmese well till he chews betel. Demosthenes is said to have put pebbles in his mouth when he was practising oratory.

517 515 302 Alternate smoking, chewing, and conversation serve to pass the day, and after dinner, when the sun goes down, our villager has a bath down by the well to freshen him up. The water is drawn up in a bucket and simply poured over the body. Soap is never used, and particular care is taken not to wet the hair. The head washing is a special ceremony, to be gone through only occasionally, and then with circumspection. Dandies, as a rule, put a solution of rice and water on their hair every day to make it grow long, and cocoanut oil is also very generally used. Both sexes are proud of the length of their hair, and it is not uncommon to see it reaching below the knee and down to the ankles. The men wear it in a yaung or knot on the top of the head, while the sadôn of the women is at the back of the head. Both men and women are in the habit of adding to its size by interweaving false tresses, which are easily got, seeing that everybody has black hair, and that some young member of the family is constantly getting his locks cut off on his entry into the monastery. There is no more sense of shame in using false hair than there is in improving the appearance by wearing fine clothes. At his bath it is usual for a pious person to repeat a Pali charm over the first bucket of water, which is then slowly poured over the body. The object of this is to guard against sickness.

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517 514 291 After bathing, the Burman, if he is young, usually puts on his fine clothes, for except in the rainy season there is sure to be a dramatic performance, or a yein dance by the village lads and lasses, or an entertainment of some kind going on at some house in the village. The dress is very simple and picturesque. The paso is a long silk cloth, fifteen cubits long and about two and a half wide. It is

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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wound round the body, kilt fashion, tucked in with a twist in front, and the portion which remains, gathered up and allowed to hang in folds from the waist, or thrown jauntily over the shoulder. The body is covered with a short white cotton jacket, over which another of dark or coloured cloth is often worn. Elderly people, and the wealthy of all ages, when they are paying a visit of ceremony or going to worship at the pagoda, wear a taing-mathein, a long white coat, open in front except at the throat, where it is tied, and reaching almost to the knees. Round the head a flowered silk handkerchief is loosely wound as a turban. The old wear a simple narrow fillet of white book-muslin round the temples and showing the hair. This is called a pawlôn.

The woman's tamein is a simple piece of cotton or silk, almost square, four feet and a half long by about five broad, and woven in two pieces of different patterns. This is wound tightly over the bosom, and fastened with a simple twist of the ends. The opening being in front, the symmetry of the thigh is displayed in walking, but a peculiar outward jerk of the heels which the girls acquire prevents any suggestion of immodesty. The loose cotton jacket is unhappily not so well contrived to display their charms. Over the shoulders is thrown a bright silk handkerchief, the same as that used by the men for turbans. Nothing is worn on the head except flowers twisted into the hair. Dressed in their best, the family sally forth in search of amusement. If it is a pwè, they will not get home till very late, possibly not till daybreak, when the yellow line of monks issuing forth on their matutinal tour may meet them at the monastery gate. A country dance naturally does not last nearly so long, though it is kept up much longer than most people would care to dance a hornpipe or even a minuet. But a still more favourite form of amusement is the entertainment of a sā-haw sayā, a kind of reciter or improvisatore. He is paid to come to a house, and the company invited are asked to choose a subject for him, some of the favourite zāts, or an incident in history, sacred or secular. Many of them, like the cyclic poets, repeat from memory, but there are others who invent their smooth verses as they go on chanting. They may perform in a house, or in a mandut

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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CHAPTER IX

THE HOUSE AND ITS BELONGINGS

IT is singular that in a country where the pagodas and temples will compare in stately grandeur and symmetry of form with the sacred edifices of any part of the world, and where the monastic buildings, though only constructed of wood, strike the most casual observer with their shapely beauty and wealth of decoration; it is singular where there is a taste for such edifices and abundance of the architectural skill necessary to erect them, that the Burman should in the vast majority of cases live in the flimsiest of bamboo huts. The original cause may be found perhaps in the stringent regulations of the Yāzagaing. In native Burma the shape of a man's house was fixed for him by law according to his station in life. All were one-storeyed, save where exceptional royal favour had granted the spire-like roof to a distinguished noble or a feudatory chief. Brick houses were forbidden, from the apprehension that the inhabitants might take it into their heads to turn them into fortifications. Gilding was forbidden to all subjects, and permission to lacquer and paint the pillars of their houses granted to but a very few, and it was expressly laid down that no one should have an arch over his door. This may account for the paltry and even wretched appearance of most villages, but it is undeniable that though nowadays, they are very considerably more substantial, yet a rich man never by any chance thinks of building himself a grand house, and remains firmly by the unpretentious model of his ancestors. This is the more curious, because they will spare no expense to buy gay turbans and bright-coloured pasos for themselves, and costly

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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517 silks for their wives. The ordinary explanation is that every one can see what clothes you wear, while few people care to come and spy out what kind of a house you live in, and how you fare. But there can be very little doubt that the real reason is a survival of the idea of the old Yāzagaing, as well as the fact that long years of custom have impressed upon everybody the opinion that there are only two forms of architecture, the secular and the ecclesiastical, and no one, no matter how sure he might be that the Government would take no notice of his ambition, would brave the denunciations of the religious by adding a spire to his house, or even adorning the gable ends with carved pinnacles and flamboyant finials of the monasteries. Consequently the one regular form prevails everywhere.

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342 576 The Burman's dwelling, then, is always shaped more or less like a marquee tent, and never more than one storey high, to avoid the humiliating possibility of the feet of some one being over your head. But the whole house stands on posts, so that the floor is seven or eight feet from the ground. It consists often of only one room, usually, however, of two or more, and to the front of the house there is always a verandah, three or four feet lower than the general level of the house, and as often as not quite open to the street, or the garden, or whatever may be in front and always to the sky. The posts which form the main or central part of the house are usually six in number, and all have their names, such as Uyu, Kya-hngan, Nyaung-yan. The south post, in the main part of the house, the Thabye-taing, is the best known, as being always adorned with leaves and particularly marked as that in the top of which most probably lives the nat-spirit of the house. A dead body, after being swathed, and while waiting for the coffin, is always placed by it.

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341 787 A house ought never to be built till the foundations have been thoroughly dug up and shown to a soothsayer. He will determine, from the substances found, whether it is a lucky place to build a house in or not. It stands to reason that the building cannot be commenced till a lucky day and hour have been sought out. There is considerable care to be observed in the selection of the timber. Posts are masculine, feminine, and neuter. Male posts are of equal size at both

2:Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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Buffalo fights, which used to be great festivals in the Tenasserim province, especially round about Amherst and Tavoy, have, under the influence of the British Government, almost totally died out. Each village used to have its champion, songs were composed in its honour, and special guards appointed to look after it, and the conqueror brought as much honour to the village as a personal victory of the inhabitants would have done. But they were nearly as brutal exhibitions as Spanish bull-fights, and only a little less dangerous.

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Field sports are barred to all but professional hunters by the religious objection to taking animal life, though when a Burman does enter upon the pursuit, he is always an enthusiastic and skilful sportsman and generally a clever shot.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

565 or a rest-house may also receive the title of 'well-
553 builder,' and so on, but such titles are rarely used in common speech. Even the builder of a long shed for water-jars may call himself after it if he likes, but it is only big builders who receive any title from their fellows. But the satisfaction to the man himself, the knowledge that he has done a good deed, is much the same, I think.

741 A Burman's wants are very few, such wants as
181 money can supply—a little house, a sufficiency of
517 plain food, a cotton dress for weekdays, and a silk one for holidays, and that is nearly all.

You see, they are still a very young people. Many wants will come, perhaps, later on, but just now their desires are easily satisfied.

The Burman does not care for a big house, for there are always the great trees and the open spaces by the village. It is far pleasanter to sit out of doors than indoors. He does not care for books. He has what is better than many books—the life of his people all about him, and he has the eyes to see it and the heart to understand it. He cares not to see with other men's eyes, but with his own; he cares not to read other men's thoughts, but to think his own, for a love of books only comes to him who is shut always from the world by ill-health, by poverty, by circumstance. When we are poor and miserable, we like to read of those who are happier. When we are shut in towns, we love to read of the beauties of the hills. When we have no love in our hearts, we like to read of those who have. Few men who think their own thoughts care much to read the thoughts of others, for a man's

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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own thoughts are worth more to him than all the thoughts of all the world besides. That a man should think, that is a great thing. No great thinkers are at the same time great readers. And he who can live his life, what cares he for reading of the lives of other people? To have loved once is more than to have read all the poets that ever sang. So a Burman thinks. To see the moon rise on the river as you float along, while the boat rocks to and fro and someone talks to you, is not that better than any tale?

So a Burman lives his life, and he asks a great deal from it. He wants fresh air and sunshine, and the great thoughts that come to you in the forest. He wants love and companionship, the voice of friends, the low laugh of women, the delight of children. He wants his life to be a full one, and he wants leisure to teach his heart to enjoy all these things; for he knows that you must learn to enjoy yourself, that it does not always come naturally, that to be happy and good-natured and open-hearted requires an education. To learn to sympathize with your neighbours, to laugh with them and cry with them, you must not shut yourself away and work. His religion tells him that the first of all gifts is sympathy; it is the first step towards wisdom, and he holds it true. After that, all shall be added to you. He believes that happiness is the first of all things.

We think differently. We are content with cheerless days, with an absence of love, of beauty, of all that is valuable to the heart, if we can but put away a little money, if we can enlarge our business,

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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if we can make a bigger figure in the world. Nay, we go beyond this: we believe that work, that drudgery, is a beautiful thing in itself, that perpetual toil and effort is admirable.

This we do because we do not know what to do with our leisure, because we do not know for what to seek, because we cannot enjoy. And so we go back to work, to feverish effort, because we cannot think, and see, and understand. 'Work is a means to leisure,' Aristotle told us long ago, and leisure, adds the Burman, is needed that you may compose your own soul. Work, no doubt, is a necessity, too, but not excess of it.

The necessary thing to a man is not gold, nor position, nor power, but simply his own soul. Nothing is worth anything to him compared with that, for while a man lives, what is the good of all these things if he have no leisure to enjoy them? And when he dies, shall they go down into the void with him? No; but a man's own soul shall go with and be with him for ever.

Like all men, a Burman's ideas of this world are dominated by his religion. His religion says to him, 'Consider your own soul, that is the main thing.' His religion says to him, 'The aim of every man should be happiness.' These are the fundamental parts of his belief; these he learns from his childhood: they are born in him. He looks at all the world by their light. Later on, when he grows older, his religion says to him, 'And happiness is only to be found by renouncing the whole world.' This is a hard teaching. This comes to him slowly, or all Buddhists would be monks; but, meanwhile,

16 Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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if he does but remember the first two precepts, he is on the right path.

He does do this. Happiness is the aim he seeks. Work and power and money are but the means by which he will arrive at the leisure to teach his own soul. First the body, then the spirit; but with us it is surely first the body, and then the body again.

He often watches us with surprise. He sees us work and work and work; he sees us grow old quickly, and our minds get weary; he sees our sympathies grow very narrow, our ideas bent into one groove, our whole souls destroyed for a little money, a little fame, a little promotion, till we go home, and do not know what to do with ourselves, because we have no work and no sympathy with anything; and at last we die, and take down with us our souls—souls fit for nothing but to be driven for ever with a goad behind and a golden fruit in front.

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But do not suppose that the Burmese are idle. Such a nation of workers was never known. Every man works, every woman works, every child works. Life is not an easy thing, but a hard, and there is a great deal of work to be done. There is not an idle man or woman in all Burma. The class of those who live on other men's labour is unknown. I do not think the Burman would care for such a life, for a certain amount of work is good, he knows. A little work he likes; a good deal of work he does, because he is obliged often to do so to earn even the little he requires. And that is the end. He is a free man, never a slave to other men, nor to himself.

16:Fielding Hall G-3 (1885-1890) 1898 AP1 Burma
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562 sing, nor play, nor paint. It must never be forgotten
517 that their civilization is relatively a thousand years behind ours. Accomplishments are part of the polish that a civilization gives, and this they have not yet reached. Accomplishments are also the means to fill up time otherwise unoccupied; but very few Burmese girls have any time on their hands. There is no leisured class, and there are very few girls who have not to help, in one way or another, at the upkeep of the household.

Mr. Rudyard Kipling tells of a young lady who played the banjo. He has been more fortunate than myself, for I have never heard of such a person.
562 They have no accomplishments at all. House-
356 keeping they have not very much of. Houses are small, and households also are small; and there is very little furniture; and as the cooking is all the same, there is not much to learn in that way. I fear, too, that their houses could not compete as models of neatness with any other nation. Tidiness is one of the last gifts of civilization. We now pride ourselves on our order; we forget how very recent an accomplishment it is. To them it will come with the other gifts of age, for it must never be forgotten that they are a very young people—only children, big children—learning very slowly the lessons of experience and knowledge.

792 When they are between eight and fourteen years
561 of age the boys become monks for a time, as every
792 boy must, and they have a great festival at their
[562] entrance into the monastery. Girls do not enter
304 nunneries, but they, too, have a great feast in their
561 honour. They have their ears bored. It is a
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being involved in bets. For this purpose special rowers are trained and fed by one or another of the big betters. These men are so strong and skilful that they can drive a boat carrying fifty to sixty baskets of paddy clear over a raft of a hundred bamboos tied together. A stop watch is used to time performances and a match may be arranged with another village. A rower by the name of NGA THIT once won over three thousand rupees for their village. U Myaing's share was three or four rupees. Some people in the village do not bet at all, others bet about forty to fifty rupees.

THE GREASED POLE: The greased pole is an amusement set up during the month of TAZAUNGMON for the KAHTEIN festival and the month of KASON for the MYAUNG-YE-THUN-BWE festival. On these occasions, besides other festivities a huge thick bamboo pole is made smooth at the joints and set upright. Then a bowl of greasy liquid such as THAYAW water (shampoo) or lard is perched towards the top of the pole in such a manner as to send the greasy liquid coursing down the pole with every slight shake it is given. On the top of the pole are placed several prizes such as items of clothing. After this people are free to get the prizes if they can. They get on one another's shoulders to reach the top. Sometimes they are successful and sometimes all of them come tumbling down. U Myaing tried this when he was young. At one KASON festival U Myaing and three others tried to reach the top by co-operating with each other but they were unsuccessful. Others try all sorts of ways such as daubing the body with mud etc.

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In the village there are few entertainments, so that even if two bullocks start to fight in the fields, someone yells out the news and everyone comes out to watch. However, special matches are not arranged in their locality.

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There was not much of social visiting back in Pathwa. Most of the visits were on business and the host proffered things such as prepared dried fish and other trifles. The talk centers around NGAPI and NGA-CHAUK. There are no visits made just because he is feeling dull and bored, although there are some people in the village who do so.

The whole family goes to the ANYEIN or marionette shows

621 722 structure of the social and political organization is the same in both places. However, the expectations and obligations of the original village are ill defined perhaps for the reason that the camp families no longer depend so completely on each other for their social and ceremonial activities. In Pathwe, U Myaing and his family were responsible citizens of the village as a whole. In camp, they are merely temporary residents with only the most rudimentary of obligations to their fellow refugees. The basic functions of the camp are carried out by semi-official persons. There is a minimum of feeling of solidarity in the camp where the immediate family is the major functioning unit.

Much has been lost with the passing of the communal activities of the small village. Yet the basic social and ceremonial activities [181] are still carried out in Rangoon. The community has become a large, impersonal one but the values are the same. The activities, as at the gigantic Shwe Dagon pagoda, duplicate those of the village on a grand scale and are hence more stimulating - but the family is no longer in a special status position and are nameless and unknown in their activities. Because of lack of money the activities are greatly curtailed in scope, but also the obligation is less. In this sense the family is "freed" from pressing obligations of the village where, for example, they were expected to contribute relatively large sums to community activities.

621 722 369 517 The familiar and beloved flavour of routine village activities is replaced by the excitement of life in the big town. Everything is new and different and while the basic understandings are still encountered the old restrictions of the small community have disappeared. Life in Rangoon is full of possibilities and amusement.

369 555 [465] 000 Recently (during the summer of 1951) U Myaing was promoted from street cleaner to boss of the cleaners of one section. He still gets a salary of Rs. 86/- a month but has the position of an overseer somewhat equivalent in status to the IN overseer's job in Pathwe. There are many opportunities for an honest and intelligent person to rise in Rangoon. In October 1951 U Myaing visited me to take an order for table mats. His samples were much too large and bound with a violent

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

said to have *stolen*. The vast majority of couples go through life faithfully and helpfully. The best influences of regular family life are developed. The dissolutions of marriage which take place are chiefly on account of incompati-

155. PLEASURE PARTY BY BOAT.

bility. Sometimes the husband and wife merely drift apart. Such a separation, when of long standing, is accepted and the parties are free to marry again. In acute and irreconcilable differences the parties apply to the elders of the place for divorce. It becomes the elders' duty to make three efforts to dissuade the couple from their purpose. Failing in these, they pronounce separation (*kwá hyí*). Pickled tea is eaten, as in the case of the marriage. The boys of the union go with the father, the girls with the mother. Common goods are divided equally; her dower and the proceeds of her independent trade and investments are at the woman's own disposal from first to last. When she can manage—as she often contrives to do—the mother keeps and provides for all her children, but they retain a lien on the father's support. There is no woman so well able to shift for herself as the woman of Burma. Her independent status would seem to be the corollary of her independent ability to manage by herself. Nowhere else is the wife more prized; nowhere is woman better able to make terms with man. Although under the Hindu code of Manú which the Burmans nominally follow, the status of woman is only the Indian

156. PLEASURE PARTY BY CART.